



News From

Maggie Brooks

MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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BROOKS ANNOUNCES COST SAVINGS FROM NEW EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN

Employees Benefits Unaffected

Monroe County Executive Maggie Brooks today announced that, beginning May 1, 2004, her administration will save \$4 million dollars in 2004, as a result of a new health insurance contract to be signed with Excellus BlueCross BlueShield, a local health insurance provider. The County anticipates a total \$12 million savings throughout the term of the contract, which runs through December 2005. The new contract is a fully insured experience rated plan that retains existing levels of employee benefits.

"I am proud to be able to announce this kind of cost cutting initiative that is a win-win for County taxpayers, employees, and an insurance provider from our local community," said Brooks. "This is the kind of 'new approach' thinking that I am encouraging from County employees and the citizen Budget Advisory Team. It is evident with this announcement that, working together, we can continue to find ways to improve operational costs."

"Monroe County has a responsibility to its taxpayers and its employees to get the best value possible for its money," said Brooks. "This change in health plans will save the County money while it preserves and expands employees' access to high quality health care at an affordable price."

Beginning May 1, County employees and retirees under age 65 who currently are Blue Choice or Blue Choice Select members will be switching their insurance coverage to Blue Point II and Blue Point II Select respectively.

Beginning June 1, County employees and retirees under age 65 who currently are Preferred Care members will be switching to Blue Point II or Blue Point II Select.

No changes are expected for the County's Medicare-eligible retirees.

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Brooks credited key staff members and her Budget Advisory Team for identifying and implementing the new health plan cost savings initiative. This is the first recommendation from her recently appointed Budget Advisory Team and it will have a direct \$4 million impact on reducing the \$25 million deficit Brooks announced to the County Legislature on Tuesday.

"We have been working over-time to identify cost cutting measures that will provide both immediate and long term solutions. This recommendation does both," said Bob Fischer, co-chair of the Budget Advisory Team. *"We are continuing to identify other cost saving opportunities that make sense and believe they will have a positive impact on the County's fiscal stability."*

Blue Point II and Blue Point II Select are fully insured experience-rated, point-of-service (POS) health plans. Like Health Maintenance Organizations, POS plans offer members extensive coverage when they receive health care services within the plan's provider network. But with a POS plan, members also have the ability to have coverage for health care services received from providers who are outside of the provider network. For example, hospital inpatient services are covered in full when provided at hospitals within the network. But members can also receive services at out-of-network hospitals for the cost of a deductible and coinsurance.

"I am determined to pursue innovative ways to do more with less, to identify budgetary efficiencies and to break new ground in our search for solutions that will help me maintain my commitment to keep Monroe County's Budget under control," said Brooks.

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